

Fieldgate School

Address: Mill Field Road, Fishlake, Doncaster, DN7 5GH

Unique reference number (URN): 149152

Inspection report: 12 May 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.
- Insufficient evidence: Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to judge whether safeguarding standards are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

The school is remarkably successful in supporting pupils to achieve well from their individual starting points and in line with their education, health and care plans' related targets. Pupils make great strides, not only academically but also in their personal, social and emotional development. The school equips pupils with the skills they need to manage their emotions and behaviour effectively. Whereas most pupils could not previously engage in education before coming to the school, they experience significant success at Fieldgate. Staff take care to design personalised learning and support that ensures pupils achieve well and thrive in all areas of school life and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

The school's structured approach to teaching English and mathematics ensures that pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills as they progress through the school. Pupils gain a range of accreditations including qualifications in English and mathematics by the end of their time at the school. Their attendance improves significantly, they learn important life skills and achieve increasing confidence to socialise, make positive contributions to the local community and aspire for future careers.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Most pupils join the school having previously had little or no attendance at their previous schools. Leaders are resolutely persistent in finding out the barriers to pupils' attendance and working with families to support pupils back into education. The flexibility of the school's provision enables leaders to identify packages of support that will best suit pupils' needs. Pupils are supported to build their confidence and understand how education will help them to be successful in life personally and academically. Pupils gradually build their attendance over time, whether through initial remote education, teaching in the community or within the on-site school provision. Central to the school's approach is the relentless focus that leaders and staff place on improving pupils' lives through education. Leaders, including the proprietor, precisely track pupils' attendance and rigorously follow up absence. When families need more support, leaders make carefully designed adjustments. They ensure that these are appropriate and successful in helping pupils to feel happy and confident in school.

All staff have the necessary expertise to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs with skill. Warm and nurturing relationships flourish across the school. Staff understand pupils' behavioural needs and provide sensitive, personalised support. They establish clear routines and address any incidents of bullying or discrimination effectively. Pupils are kept safe and appreciate that staff are there to help them. They develop positive attitudes to learning and rise to leaders' high expectations.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a highly effective inclusive culture across the school's provision. The proprietor's determined ambition to turn pupils' lives around shines through the ethos of the school and the dedication and expertise of staff. The school's therapeutic provision and

personalised learning and care enable all pupils to engage in education and achieve success. Leaders work closely with local authorities to ensure that pupils' education, health and care (EHC) plans inform learning and tailor support. Pupils benefit from the flexibility of the school's provision that meets their individual requirements well. Pupils are welcomed and thrive in whatever way they access the school. Leaders work very effectively with external professionals, including social workers for pupils known to social care, to ensure pupils get effective support that will help them to access the curriculum and succeed. Pupils are safe and happy, and make positive progress towards their EHC plan outcomes and personal targets. This includes looked-after children.

Pupils' individual needs are identified and supported by skilled staff. Staff are highly trained to focus on reducing barriers to pupils' learning. They are adept in making adjustments to lessons to help pupils learn well and provide highly effective pastoral support.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

The proprietor and leaders are absolutely dedicated to ensuring that the school provides every pupil with the opportunity to make a fresh start to their education. They are determined to ensure every effort is made to remove disadvantage, meet pupils' individual needs well and help them to achieve highly. Leaders know pupils very well. They ensure that pupils are safe and happy and can succeed.

Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the school's priorities and strengths. The proprietor maintains close oversight of the impact of school improvement priorities and works closely with school leaders to check the accuracy of the information leaders provide. Leaders are aspirational for all pupils. They collaborate purposefully with local authorities and external agencies to adapt and enhance the school's provision to meet pupils' needs and improve their outcomes.

Staff enjoy working at the school and appreciate the 'close-knit' staff team. They value the support of leaders to manage their workload and wellbeing. Leaders provide staff with precise, evidence-informed training and opportunities to strengthen their expertise and progress their careers.

Leaders work in partnership with parents and carers, who typically praise the positive difference the school makes to their children's lives after years of struggling in other school settings. Leaders are highly proactive in their work with external professionals and other schools to support the welfare of pupils. The proprietor understands its legal responsibilities to ensure the welfare of pupils and compliance with the independent school standards (the standards). Leaders have ensured that the standards are met consistently over time. Suitable arrangements are in place so that the school meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

The school provides high-quality support for pupils social, emotional and mental health needs. It places pupils' personal development and wellbeing at the heart of its ambition to shape pupils' lives for the better. The school designs the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum with precision. It is structured so that pupils develop

appropriate depth of knowledge and skills over time. Pupils learn age-appropriate relationships and sex education and health education. Important topics of learning are revisited and supplemented by the school's 'Fieldgate chat' sessions and through opportunities for pupils to debate and discuss relevant issues such as online safety, consent and the impact of bullying. Staff know pupils well and understand the trauma that many have faced and that some pupils continue to face. Staff are particularly skilled in discerning how best to support pupils.

Pupils benefit from the school's highly nurturing environment where they feel safe, valued and supported to express their personalities and grow their social skills. They make the most of the extensive grounds, enjoying a range of outdoor education activities. Staff and therapists provide skilled tailored support for pupils' wellbeing through individual interventions informed by pupils' education, health and care plans and the school's ongoing assessment of pupils' needs. Pupils develop their self-belief, become increasingly independent and learn essential life skills such as emergency first aid. They are proud of their leadership roles where they can contribute to decision-making for the school. They develop awareness of diversity and the importance of treating others with respect.

Pupils enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. These include sports and visiting museums, farms, art galleries and facilities at a local theme park. A suitable careers programme is in place and starts with the youngest pupils. Staff help pupils to choose suitable further education providers and potential employment and training options. Visitors to school and careers focused workshops enhance the personal development programme and help pupils to make informed next steps.

Expected standard

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have established a curriculum that considers pupils' different starting points and focuses on helping pupils to catch up with missed learning. It is ambitious and sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge progressively during their time at the school. Pupils benefit from small group teaching and sometimes one-to-one adult support. This means that staff get to know pupils well and can design precise teaching and support to help pupils make positive progress towards their education, health and care plan targets. Staff are trained to deliver the curriculum effectively. Pupils are immersed in regular enrichment opportunities to support their understanding of curriculum subjects and bring learning to life.

The school places appropriately sharp focus on reading and mathematics. Staff teach phonics with precision and promote the joy of reading. They typically teach writing well, providing opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their competency in writing. However, at times, teachers do not provide effective enough support to pupils in the early stages of learning to write. As a result, a minority of pupils do not develop early writing skills as securely as they could.

Staff check how well pupils learn and use this assessment information to inform and adapt teaching. They make sure that pupils develop important knowledge across the curriculum to learn well and equip them for their next steps.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are warmly welcomed by caring and supportive staff at this inclusive and highly nurturing school. Pupils at Fieldgate have previously struggled to attend other school settings. Here, they benefit from being able to access education in a way that meets their needs very effectively. Pupils engage successfully in education through the proprietor's flexible 'school without walls' offer, which is fostered by leaders' carefully considered therapeutic and encouraging culture. Pupils receive personalised learning and support to help them to attend well and enjoy learning in a calm, caring environment. Classrooms, and the way pupils access education, are thoughtfully designed to ease pupils' anxiety and promote their wellbeing. Class sizes are small, helping pupils to develop their social interaction skills. They receive high levels of skilled adult support. Staff establish positive and trusting relationships with pupils that reduce barriers to attendance and learning.

Leaders listen to pupils and encourage them to take an active part in decision-making for the school. Pupils and their parents and carers highly appreciate the difference the school has made to their lives. Staff ensure that each pupil's education, health and care plan sits at the heart of teaching and wider enrichment. Staff support pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs very well, enabling pupils to enjoy school. Pupils develop their self-esteem and become increasingly confident to socialise with others and seek help when needed.

Pupils rise to the school's high expectations for their behaviour and attitudes. Staff provide timely and effective support when pupils struggle to manage their emotions. Pupils trust staff to keep them safe. They achieve well personally and academically. They leave well-prepared for their next steps.

A rich variety of local area visits, curriculum themed trips and visitors promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing effectively. Pupils enjoy caring for the school's pets, including guinea pigs, a bearded dragon and Stanley the therapy dog. Pupils relish preparing and cooking healthy meals and taking part in outdoor education activities. All at the school are rightly proud of their fundraising activities and participation in local community events.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that barriers to early writing are always supported effectively and provision for pupils in the early stages of learning to write, including handwriting and spelling, is highly effective.
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About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this standard inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, and checked the school's compliance with the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders for the school, such as the safeguarding lead and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and assistant SENCo and school business manager. Inspectors also met with national leaders and directors for the proprietor, including the chair of the proprietor body.

The name of the proprietor is Five Rivers Child Care Ltd. The chair of the proprietor body is Rachel Lambert

The fees currently charged are £77,041

The email address of the school is fgadmin@five-rivers.org

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not currently use alternative provision.

The school mainly operates from 2 sites. The main school site at Mill Field Road, Fishlake, Doncaster DN7 5GH and an additional site located at Gulliver's Activity Centre, Mansfield Road, Sheffield S26 5QW.

The school provides specialist education for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and for those with autism. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.

The school offers education provision via its 'school without walls'. This enables them to support pupils who have had limited success in formal education settings or who have previously struggled in other specialised settings. The school's offer of its 'stepping stones' provision focuses on identifying pupils' interests and then building personalised learning opportunities around them. Some pupils access tuition through the proprietor's virtual education, which is accredited by the Department for Education (DfE) as a provider of online education.

The school is registered to admit up to 45 pupils.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in March 2026.

Headteacher: Simon McBride

Independent school standards

Independent school standards are either met or not met for each category.

1. Quality of education provided

Standards met

All standards have been met.

2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Standards met

All standards have been met.

4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Standards met

All standards have been met.

5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Standards met

All standards have been met.

6. Provision of information

Standards met

All standards have been met.

7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Standards met

All standards have been met.

All standards have been met.

Lead inspector:
Stephanie Innes-Taylor, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:
Suzette Garland-Grimes, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This data was available to the inspector at the time of the inspection.

 This data is from 12 May 2026

Total pupils

39

School capacity

45

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

39

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

0

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

Insufficient evidence

Inspectors were unable to gather reliable enough evidence to grade an evaluation area. This is rare and normally only happens if there are no pupils on roll at the school.

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